

**Joint Working Group – Commission on Children and Families and Policy  
Roundtable for Child Care  
June 3, 2013**

**Recommendations:**

**1. The Commission on Children and Families should continue to highlight the need to better serve young children by developing partnerships with key institutions that can assist families, kin and caregivers to enroll children in high quality child care and development services.**

Current California law calls for young children who are abused/neglected and receiving protective services OR children who are significantly at risk of future abuse to be categorically eligible and prioritized for these services, but there are numerous barriers to implementation. As a result, the Advancement Project conservatively estimates that 12.8% of the DCFS caseload under age five as of October 2011 (1,509 of 11,778) were attending public early care and education programs including Head Start and subsidized child care/preschool.

Without systematic and sustained help from key institutional partners<sup>1</sup> adept in working through these barriers, DCFS alone is unlikely to be successful in establishing a systematic approach to assuring that these vulnerable children receive the long-term benefits associated with high-quality early care and education.

**2. The Policy Roundtable for Child Care and the Office of Child Care should work with DCFS to develop policy and practice supports to ensure that parents, foster parents and kinship caregivers know about and are referred to all available types of subsidized child care (e.g., Head Start/Early Head Start, state contracted child care programs LAUP).**

The fact that lack of access to subsidized child care has become a major barrier to recruiting foster parents willing to care for young children highlights the importance of this issue. The Advancement Project report shows that only about 2.13% of children receiving state subsidized early care and education services in LA County did so because they were receiving protective services and most of these were served by the Alternative Payment (AP) program administered by DCFS, which does not have sufficient resources to meet all needs. While progress has been made in referring families to LACOE's Head Start program, LAUSD's subsidized child care programs and a few others, there is still no systematic way to assure that DCFS families have access the full range of services available throughout the county.

DCFS has developed guidelines to assure that limited resources support as many families as possible (e.g., not serving children who are already in foster care, maxing out after about 12 months of service). A systematic approach is needed to create

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<sup>1</sup> For example, institutional partners may include the Office of Child Care, the Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles, LACOE, LAUSD and other school districts.

pathways so that all kinds of families in all communities have access to available resources.

**3. DCFS should explore the possibility of adding responsibility for assessment of early care and education needs to contract requirements for community-based service providers serving families with young children.**

In New York City, the ACS Office of Community Partnerships includes assessment of and linkage to early care and education as requirements for community contractors who provide prevention and family support services. DCFS should assess which of its current contractors have this capacity or have linkages with their local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies or with community-based early care and education agencies who might help develop this service.

**4. DCFS should request assistance from First 5 LA to:**

**a. Assess best practices in other jurisdictions and analyze options in LA County that would provide access to all available early care and education options in a more systematic manner.**

**b. Assess the value added by two-generation approaches that link efforts to enroll young children in early care and education programs while providing opportunities for their parents/caregivers to participate in evidence-based parenting programs.**

A recent analysis by DMH showed that there are 473 DCFS clients enrolled in three key evidence-based parenting programs. These include: Triple P Positive Parenting (25 agencies serving 210 DCFS clients), Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (13 agencies serving 159 DCFS clients), and Incredible Years (14 agencies serving 104 DCFS clients). Analysis of geography, capacity, existing and potential linkages could lay the groundwork for pilot testing and evaluation of the value added by linking these parallel processes – enhanced access to high-quality early education and evidence-based supports for parenting – that are already well underway in LA County.

**c. Make recommendations on key performance indicators to track participation of young children in early care and education programs that could be used by DCFS regional office to track progress in improving child and family well-being.** For example, utilization of early care and education services could be tracked in CWS/CMS by creating another field on the special projects section similar to that created for families receiving Family Preservation, Family Support or other special services.